

We, today, live in a world that is very different than the world we lived in 10 years ago. The Berlin wall has come down, Eastern Europe has been liberated, the Soviet Union has been transformed, and we have seen more people achieve their freedom than in any victory in any war in the history of mankind.

There are two people on this planet who have had more to do with that than any other people who have lived, and those two people are Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

Today, we honor George Bush with his library. We are proud of his achievements. But it is more than just his achievements, we are proud of George Bush. George Bush is a great man. George Bush is the kind of man you would want your son to grow up to be.

He is in many ways an old-fashioned man—as some would say, maybe fashion that is out of style today. But I don't think so. George Bush is the kind of man who tries and tries—tried as President and in everything in his life to try to figure out what was right—and he tried to figure out then how to do it.

George Bush is a man that has a keen sense of duty. And whether he was a young naval officer risking his life for his country, or serving as President, when George Bush was on watch for America, he was dedicated to the task.

We are honoring him today in College Station. We are dedicating his school and his library. Senator HUTCHISON and I are unable to be there because we are here doing the work of the people and doing our duty.

We wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate President Bush and his family—to congratulate him on his great library; on what it will mean to Texas A&M and our State, and what it means to us.

I just simply wanted to say, Mr. President, to George Bush and to his family that we are all proud of you. We are proud of your Texas, and we love you.

I yield whatever time she might use to Senator HUTCHISON.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I want to add my remarks to those of my senior colleague.

We are so proud in Texas that President Bush is opening his library today. We are proud that he chose to do it in Texas because he had other home States that he could have chosen, but that he came to Texas where he had his roots, his business, and raised his family. It means a lot to us.

Also, I think what it is going to add to the intellectual commitment to Texas A&M, the foreign policy commitment to Texas A&M, and to all Americans is going to be great. It is going to be a great contribution for foreign policy debates; for leaders to come together. I think it is going to provide a diversity of views and opinions that will certainly enlighten all of us.

So, we are proud that the opening of the library is today. I know that through the years we will all be very thankful that President Bush has chosen to have a school and a place for people to discuss very important domestic and foreign policy issues. I know that he will provide a fine quality of opportunity for all of us to learn from.

So I appreciate it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to chat very briefly in morning business concerning a matter that has come before the Senate from time to time that is of great interest to those of us in the Western States. That is the national issue of what is termed "Teaming With Wildlife."

The Teaming With Wildlife initiative has grown, and those of us in the West recognize that we are very fortunate in having probably the best area on Earth to fish, hunt, and explore the great outdoors. I know the occupant of the Chair from the State of Oregon, and myself from the State of Alaska, are great boosters of that great outdoors with unsurpassed natural beauty and wildlife, particularly the Western States. I am not suggesting other States don't have the same. But perhaps ours is a little larger and the magnitude is a little greater. But we have extraordinary natural beauty, wildlife, and I particularly look forward every time I am back home in Alaska to enjoy the outdoors.

As chairman of the committee with jurisdiction overseeing our public lands in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I am well aware that this bounty we enjoy doesn't come free. It takes huge sums of money to acquire and maintain our legacy of public lands which we enjoy. That is why I support providing additional funds to the States for all outdoor recreation programs, including fish and wildlife conservation.

This brings me to the goals associated with the Teaming With Wildlife proposal, which I support along with many Alaskans, and I know many of my colleagues in this body. But I would like to point out some of the concerns because in the enthusiasm for Teaming With Wildlife some of these things are overlooked. So let me share a few of them with you.

Mr. President, the proposal advanced by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies would im-

pose a new tax on the American people where that connection between the products being taxed and the use of the tax revenue in some cases is tenuous, to say the least.

Mr. President, for decades hunters and anglers have worked very well in contributing to the management, conservation, and restoration of wildlife habitat and fisheries resources through an excise tax imposed at the manufacturing level. These targeted taxes have been a resounding success for one reason. That reason, Mr. President, is there is a direct link between the items taxed and the use of the tax revenue.

The Pittman-Robertson Act, for example, imposes an excise tax on sporting arms, on handguns, on ammunition and archery equipment. The Wallop-Breaux fund does basically the same thing with fishing equipment and motorboat fuel. Money raised from this generates revenue that goes directly back in enhancing fishing and motorizing in our various lakes and waterways. So States use the resulting tax revenue for the purchase and restoration of public wildlife habitat, and wildlife management research. Hunters like myself don't mind at all paying the extra tax on rifles and shells because we know that the revenue will be spent on increasing and improving habitat where we can hunt and recreate.

Yet, the direct link—this is the key, Mr. President—between the items taxed and the use of the resulting tax revenue is broader in the Teaming With Wildlife proposal. That legislative proposal would result in a tax being imposed on virtually everything from backpacks to tents, from hiking boots to sports utility vehicles, from film to binoculars. The revenue would be used by States for a worthwhile purpose, which I support, of wildlife research planning, fishing and wildlife-associated recreation, and research projects.

But the facts are that while many of the items being taxed would be used in the great outdoors to benefit the expanded use of the outdoors, many of these products would not. We looked at a 1995 survey by the Sports Market Research Group that indicates that 69 percent of all backpacks sold—you might think they are going for camping—are used by schoolchildren while 27 percent of all sleeping bags sold are for indoor use. Is that a fair tax to those consumers?

Some suggest a new tax is not needed when an existing program could meet many of the needs for outdoor recreation resources throughout the Nation. Over 30 years ago, we created in Congress the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the LWCF, for the sole purpose of meeting America's needs for outdoor recreation, including the acquisition of property for fish and wildlife conservation purposes. Money in the fund would come from offshore oil and gas royalties—OCS activities off the shores of our various coastal States.

Up to 60 percent of the \$900 million annually available is to be passed on to

the States. Unfortunately, the States have not received any money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the past 4 years. And many in this body have even forgotten the benefits of the program. What we have done with that money is use it to reach our budget objectives, solely ignoring the purpose of the program. I think we should do more to encourage the States to support offshore oil and gas development in a responsible manner using our science and technology. As evidence is the tremendous development occurring in the Gulf of Mexico off Louisiana, Texas, and other areas. Perhaps we could by guaranteeing States some portion of the revenue from OCS activities. That would instill a sense of belonging and a sense of interest that those States currently don't have.

Further, a portion of the Federal mineral receipts perhaps could be set aside in a dedicated permanent fund and the income generated from the fund could be passed on to the States in the form of matching grants for outdoor recreation. In many State parks in the West, including my State of Alaska, land was purchased with money from the land and water conservation Fund. And much of what Teaming with Wildlife seeks to accomplish should be done with funds generated from such areas. I think offshore oil and gas development would gain us a broader support necessary to pass legislation such as Teaming with Wildlife, and I think we must explore fully using existing funding resources to help meet these laudable goals because I fear that we are going to have a hard time differentiating just what portion is a legitimate tax on this broad area, as I have indicated before that we have identified, including sleeping bags, film, binoculars, hiking boots, and so forth.

I encourage those who are interested to help us as we address responsibly how to fund equitably for this purpose of Teaming with Wildlife that, indeed, addresses those who are active in utilizing the great outdoors and purchase legitimate items that can be legitimately attached without getting into the situation where we are in dispute over the portion and the formula and the use.

So as chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I am committed to help bringing the States together to meet the growing demand for fish and wildlife habitat, for outdoor recreation resources, and I certainly encourage all Alaskans to join me in providing input on what we think is a fair and workable method to raise funds for the great outdoors and not overlooking the intention of the land and water conservation fund which has been, I think it is fair to say, observed by the budgeteers as a place to pick up significant funding to meet some of our budget obligations.

So I thank my colleagues for their indulgence and encourage everyone to work in a positive manner to meet the

challenges associated with Teaming with Wildlife for a fair and equitable funding mechanism.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, seeing no other Senators on the floor, I wish to address my views on the passage of the nuclear waste legislation by the U.S. House of Representatives, which occurred last week.

Mr. President, last week Congress took a very important step toward ending our Nation's 15-year struggle with how to solve our high-level nuclear waste problem. Last week, the House passed H.R. 1270 by an overwhelming, bipartisan 307-to-120 vote. The House bill is a companion to S. 104, the nuclear waste bill passed by the Senate by a 65-to-34 vote last spring.

Like the Senate bill, the House bill would take nuclear waste from 80 sites in 40 States, from the backyards of our constituents all across this land, and move it to one safe, central storage site. The Federal Government has a contractual commitment to take this nuclear waste for safe and central storage by next January.

Will that happen? The answer is clearly "no," even though over \$13 billion has been collected from America's ratepayers to pay for the permanent storage of that waste, and even though a Federal court order has reaffirmed the Government's legal obligation to take nuclear waste in January 1998. The same court is now considering what remedy the Government must provide for its failure to meet this obligation. This is the Government's failure, but it is the American taxpayer that is going to bear the burden. The American public paid that \$13 billion into the nuclear waste fund and now will have to pay a second time. Estimates of potential damages for the failure of the Department of Energy to meet its obligations range from \$40 billion to as high as \$80 billion. That is \$1,300 per American family.

How important is the nuclear power industry in this country? It contributes around 22 percent of the total power generation in this country. It provides electricity with no emissions, so air quality is not a problem. The problem is what do you do with the waste? You cannot throw it up in the air. It has to come down somewhere. The reality is that no one wants it. The French reprocess their spent fuel and recover the plutonium, put it back in the reactors and burn it. The Japanese are moving in that direction, as well.

We are hopelessly tied to a dilemma: no one wants nuclear waste and we don't have any place to put it. Some of the plants are reaching their maximum capacity. Without the licensing of proper storage and without the Federal Government meeting its obligations to take this waste, we stand to lose a significant portion of our Nation's nuclear generating capacity.

How are we going to make up for this lost generation? Are we going to put more coal fired plants on-line? How does the Clinton administration reconcile this position with their professed concern about emissions? If we lose a portion of our nuclear power generating capability, it is going to have to be replaced with something, and the Clinton administration has not provided us with any answers. Nor has it adequately addressed its contractual responsibility to take this waste.

Mr. President, without the legislation passed by the both the House and the Senate, there is no plan for action except more lawsuits, more employment for the lawyers. As we move to conference, opponents of the bill will continue to sing the same old, tired refrain. They call it "Mobile Chernobyl," emasculating NEPA, running roughshod over our environmental laws. These scare tactics are a coverup, an excuse for no action. That is what we have had so far, no action in 15 years.

They will say the fuel is safely stored where it is. It is stored in temporary facilities next to the reactors that were designed for just that, temporary storage. But if it is safely stored where it is, then why isn't it safe to store it in Nevada at the Nevada test site, near where we have spent over \$6 billion to develop a site that is facing, in the near future, licensing and suitability decisions? In fact, there is no question in my mind it must be safer to have one central, monitored site than to have nuclear waste at 80 sites scattered around the country at facilities that have been designed for temporary storage.

Then, of course, they argue that somehow it is unsafe to move nuclear fuel to one central site. But we have shown how we have been safely moving fuel around this country and abroad for many, many years. The French, the Japanese, and the Swedes move it by vessel, they move it by rail, they move it by truck.

They say the transportation casks cannot stand a 30-mile-per-hour crash or survive a diesel fuel fire. These are more emotional arguments that have no foundation. We have shown that the casks have been tested by locomotives going 90 miles an hour crashed into brick walls. They have been submerged in water, bathed in fire. The casks are designed to withstand any type of imaginable impact associated with transportation. We have shown that, while we have had a few minor accidents, there has never been a release of radiation. We have shown how our national laboratories have certified that